

DTIC FILE COPY

AD-A223 588

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

## STUDY PROJECT

### THE FUTURE ROLE OF UNITED STATES FORCES IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

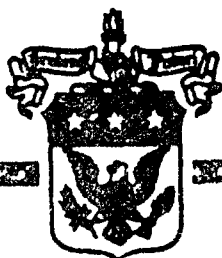
BY

COLONEL MICHAEL A. CANAVAN, IN

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

23 MARCH 1990

DTIC  
ELECTE  
JUL 02 1990  
S B D



U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle)  The Future Role of the United States Forces in the Republic of Korea		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED  Study Project
7. AUTHOR(s)  Michael A. Canavan, Colonel, IN		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS  U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS  Same		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE  23 March 1990
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES  35
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report)  Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)  Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)  The purpose of this study is to examine the future role of U.S. military forces in the Republic of Korea. For the past 37 years the national interest of the United States in Northeast Asia has been a policy of maintaining stabilization and a military balance in the region. This study examines over time, the geo-strategic importance of the Korean Peninsula in Northeast Asia. The evolution of United States and Republic of Korea relations is traced to show how this relationship matured over the years to the present. The interests		

UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE(When Data Entered)

of the four major powers in the region, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and the United States, are discussed in both a historical and modern day setting. The military capabilities of North and South Korea are compared along with their military strategies. North Korea, having the sixth largest army in the world, remains a real threat to the survival of Republic of Korea. The U.S. Army has the bulk of these forces within the forward deployed 2d Infantry Division, the key U.S. ground combat unit. Recent Congressional cuts of 7,000 U.S. personnel from South Korea have had a negative impact within both South Korea and all the major regional powers. They see the presence of the U.S. forces in South Korea as the only deterrent against North Korean aggression. The paper concludes that it is in the best interest of all concerned that the United States retain, for the present, a viable military presence to deter North Korea from any unilateral action against South Korea. This presence needs to remain until North Korea changes its stated goal of armed unification or a change of leadership reflecting peaceful coexistence comes into power.

UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE(When Data Entered)

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

THE FUTURE ROLE OF UNITED STATES FORCES IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF KOREA

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Colonel Michael A. Canavan, IN

James W. Williams, Ph.D.  
Project Advisor

**DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public  
release; distribution is unlimited.**

U.S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
23 March 1990

**The views expressed in this paper are those of the  
author and do not necessarily reflect the views of  
the Department of Defense or any of its agencies.  
This document may not be released for open publication  
until it has been cleared by the appropriate military  
service or government agency.**

# ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Michael A. Canavan, COL, IN

TITLE: The Future Role of United States Forces in the Republic of Korea.

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 23 March 1990 PAGES: 32 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

— The purpose of this study is to examine the future role of U.S. military forces in the Republic of Korea. For the past 37 years the national interest of the United States in Northeast Asia has been a policy of maintaining stabilization and a military balance in the region. This study examines over time, the geo-strategic importance of the Korean Peninsula in Northeast Asia. The evolution of United States and Republic of Korea relations is traced to show how this relationship matured over the years to the present. The interests of the four major powers in the region, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and the United States, are discussed in both a historical and modern day setting. The military capabilities of North and South Korea are compared along with their military strategies. North Korea, having the sixth largest army in the world, remains a real threat to the survival of Republic of Korea. The U.S. forces in South Korea today total 43,000 personnel. The U.S. Army has the bulk of these forces within the forward deployed 2nd Infantry Division, the key U.S. ground combat unit. Recent Congressional cuts of 7,000 U.S. personnel from South Korea have had a negative impact within both South Korea and all the major regional powers. They see the presence of the U.S. forces in South Korea as the only deterrent against North Korean aggression. The paper concludes that it is in the best interest of all concerned that the United States retain, for the present, a viable military presence to deter North Korea from any unilateral action against South Korea. This presence needs to remain until North Korea changes its stated goal of armed unification or a change of leadership reflecting peaceful coexistence comes into power.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Geo-Strategic Importance.....	1
II. EVOLUTION OF ROK-US RELATIONS.....	7
End Of World War II.....	7
Korean War.....	9
III. BIG POWER INTERESTS IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA.....	12
Soviet Union.....	12
China.....	13
Japan.....	15
United States.....	16
IV. NORTH AND SOUTH KOREAN MILITARY CAPABILITIES.....	19
Military Balance.....	22
V. FUTURE ROLE OF THE U.S. MILITARY IN SOUTH KOREA.....	24
VI. CONCLUSIONS.....	28
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	31



Accession For	
NTIS GRA&I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	

# THE FUTURE OF UNITED STATES FORCES IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The fundamental purpose of the United States national interest in Northeast Asia is to seek stabilization of the region by maintaining a balance among the major powers. The equilibrium in this region is essential to peace and security, not only for this region but also for the world. The Korean Peninsula is one of the most critical areas of international politics in the world today. It is the focal point of interests of four major powers: the United States, the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, and Japan. Due to the unique strategic location and the violent history of the Korean Peninsula, the maintenance of peace there is of primary interest of U.S. foreign policy. For this purpose, the United States has maintained its military presence in South Korea for more than a quarter of a century. Although there are many other interrelated factors, the presence of U.S. forces in South Korea is a decisive factor in deterring a North Korean attack and maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula and in the region. 1

The primary purpose of this paper is to assess the United States future military role in the Republic of South

Korea based on four areas: (1) geographical importance; (2) evolution of U.S. and South Korean relationships; (3) the Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, Japan and the United States political and military interests in the Korean Peninsula and; (4) the relationships between the Republic of South Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

#### GEO-STRATEGICAL IMPORTANCE

Korea is geostrategically and geopolitically unique. It is the only nation in the world where the interests of four major powers intersect--the Soviet Union, China, Japan and the United States meet in one strategic area.

The total land area of the Korean Peninsula, including adjacent islands is 220,847 square miles, of which 44 percent or 98,477 square kilometers comprise the territory of South Korea. South Korea is about the size of the state of Indiana. 2

North Korea's northern border extends about 1,300 kilometers most of which is shared with China and only 16 kilometers borders on the Soviet Union. Although North Korea's border with the Soviet Union is relatively short, it has served as North Korea's most important gateway to Siberia as well as to the Kremlin in Moscow. Through the border, North Korea has engaged in on-land trade with the Soviet superpower. A railway crossing the border connects North Korea with Vladivostok of the Soviet Union. This geopolitical situation makes it possible for North Korea to



be closely related to the Soviet Union, particularly in the realm of security affairs. 3

The Soviet Union has three fundamental strategic interests in North Korea, stemming from its geographical location. First, access to North Korea's warm water ports would provide the Soviets nearly a monopoly in the North Pacific, and freedom to use North Korea for strategic purposes would add substantially to Soviet defensive and offensive capabilities in Northeast Asia. Second, North Korea represents an important point of contention in the continuing Sino-Soviet conflict. The Soviet Union has a strong interest in maintaining influence over North Korea due to Pyongyang's strategic position in regard to China. Third, Soviet domination of North Korea would offer a better chance for the Soviet Union to expand its military power throughout the Pacific. Such a development would help the Soviets eliminate any U.S. strategic hold on the Asian mainland and utilize its presence to compel Japan to cooperate with Soviet designs in Northeast Asia. 4

The People's Republic of China has a strong geo-strategic interest in Korea because of its long common border with Korea which is close to its industrial base in Manchuria. The Chinese have always considered Korea to be the "lips to China's teeth" and thus supported North Korea during the Korean War. Korea is still strategically and geographically important to the security of Peking. Korea has twice (at the end of the sixteenth and nineteenth

centuries) been a theater of Japanese military expansion that had China as its main ultimate target. 5

The Chinese are now seeing a much reduced Soviet threat as a result of Moscow's recent internal problems, its overextension abroad, and the resurgence of American power in Asia. However, Peking continues to regard the Soviet Union as the main threat to its security. So long as the Soviet Union maintains more than 50 divisions on China's northern border, modernizes and expands its Pacific fleet, continues to provide military hardware to North Korea in return for usage of its ports, the Chinese are likely to remain skeptical about Soviet intentions on the Korean Peninsula. All of the above factors add to the Chinese feeling of being encircled by the Soviet Union.6

The Japanese interest in the Korean Peninsula has a historical and a modern base. Militarily, the peninsula has served both as a Japanese invasion route into Asia and as an avenue for hostile armies to attack Japan. During World War II, the Japanese used the Korean people as a labor source and exploited the natural resources of the area now controlled by North Korea.

Today, the Japanese view South Korea as a geographic buffer area. Domination of South Korea by a hostile power, be it North Korea, Communist China or the Soviet Union singly or in a combination, would have a major impact on Japan's security. The Korean Peninsula is only thirty 30 miles from the closest Japanese island. 7

The interest of the United States in the Korean Peninsula is threefold: prevention of armed unification by North Korea, a economically and politically stable South Korea, and, the protection of Japanese security. Japan is protected under the U.S. nuclear umbrella by the nuclear arsenal located in South Korea. What is emphasized is a firm American commitment to regional status quo and the maintaining of peace and stability on the peninsula. This is directly linked to the United State's geo-strategic interest in the preservation of regional stability and the avoidance of conflict with China or the Soviet Union. 8

In conclusion, South Korea's geopolitical and strategic location has historically occupied a central role in regional politics, and any shifts of power in the region have greatly affected the status and policies of the neighboring power. For centuries, Korea has been the cockpit of nations which have sought regional dominance and has been the springboard for invasions of both China and Japan.

# ENDNOTES

1. Kwang-Il Baek. Korea and the United States. Seoul: Seoul Computer Press, 1988, p. 167.

2. Agency for International Development. AID Agency Data Book For Countries of the Far East. Korea Section, Washington: US Government Printing Office, May 1971, p. XIII.

3. Suk Ryal Yu. "Soviet-North Korean Relations and Security on the Korean Peninsula." Asian Perspective, Volume 11, No 1, Spring-Summer 1987, p. 75.

4. Ibid., pp. 76-77.

5. Young-Jeh Kim. Toward a Unified Korea. Seoul: Seoul Computer Company, 1987, p. 169.

6. Donald Zagoria. The U.S.-Korean Security Relationship: Prospects and Challenges for the 1990s. Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc., 1988, p. 20.

7. Young C. Kim. Major Powers and Korea. Maryland: Research Institute for Korean Affairs, 1973, p. 53.

8. Chin-Tae So. "South Korea and It's Security Environment." Air University, Report No. MS 116-81, April 1981, p.45.

## CHAPTER II

### EVOLUTION OF ROK-US RELATIONS

This chapter will cover the period from the origin of U.S. involvement in South Korea to the immergence of the security commitment that is in place today. During this time the United States shifted from a policy of disinterest to one of a strong defense commitment to the Republic of Korea (ROK).

#### END OF WORLD WAR II

Prior to 1943, the United States was largely indifferent to Korea, acquiescing to the Japanese colonization of the peninsula from 1910-1945. In November, 1943, at Cairo, the representatives of the United States, Great Britain, and China, declared their intention in dealing with Korea. The aforesaid three powers, mindful of the Japanese enslavement of the people of Korea declared that Korea would become free and independent at the end of the war. 1

Although this statement was the only reference to the Allie's postwar political objectives on the Korean Peninsula, the United States officially committed itself to postwar independence for Korea. This was a significant turning point in U.S. foreign toward Korea.

At Yalta, in February 1945, President Roosevelt and

Joseph Stalin agreed to a Korean trusteeship to be administered by the United States, China, and Russia. Significant was the agreement between the United States and Russia, that, once the Japanese surrender had been accepted and the trusteeship set up, Soviet and U.S. troops would withdraw from Korea and Korea would become independent. 2

At the end of World War II the division of Korea at the 38th parallel was for the purpose of receiving the surrender of Japanese troops. The Soviet Union would accept surrender of Japanese forces north of the 38th parallel and the United States south of the 38th parallel. Unfortunately with the end of World War II, the national interests of the United States and the Soviet Union clashed, and the result was the liberation of Korea from the Japanese occupation was not followed by the independence and unification that had been pledged. Instead, there was a permanent division of the peninsula into two conflicting camps.

Besides receiving the surrender of Japanese forces the United States had specific political motives for entering Korea: (1) to prevent occupation of all of Korea by Soviet forces, (2) to place the United States in as strong a position as possible to implement the promise of Korean independence, (3) to provide for the security of Japan during the period of occupation and (4) to limit the area of Communist control. 3

Once the 38th parallel was established there remained two distinct zones of occupation. The Soviet Union in the

industrialized North and the United States in the agrarian South. The plan was for the country to be unified after free elections. In September, 1947, the United States went to the United Nations General Assembly and pushed through a resolution that the Korean people should be allowed to establish their own form of government. Elections were only held in the South. In 1948, Dr. Syngman Rhee was elected president by the Republic Of South Korea (ROK). Elections in the North were not allowed by the Soviets. With the backing of the Soviets, kim Il Sung became the head of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. 4

The South Korean Army was established in September 1948 but was hampered by a communist-led revolt which weakened the entire military establishment, consuming much of its attention and resources. Given South Korea's precarious future and the recent communist victory in China, the United States was not eager to provide much support. Its occupation forces had been withdrawn, save for a handful of military advisers, by June 1949, and South Korea was considered to be outside of the United States defense perimeter. 5

#### KOREAN WAR

On 25 June 1950, North Korean forces launched a full scale attack against the South. At the time of the war's outbreak, the United States and the Republic of Korea had no security treaty ensuring U.S. military intervention in the case of an external armed attack on South Korea. However

the U.S. became immediately committed to the war in meetings of the United Nations National Security Council. Following the policy of containment, the United States was determined to ward off any communist expansionism. Defending South Korea was viewed as important to the United States, not because of the strategic importance of Korea, but because the North Korean attack was seen as a projection of Soviet Communist influence in a bipolar Cold War. The United States had to become involved in the Korean War in order to establish American credibility as an anti-Communist power. The military conflict in Korea came to a halt on 25 July 1953 with the United States signing an armistice agreement to restore the boundary along the original 38th parallel. 6

In conclusion, one year after the signing of the armistice, the United States and South Korea signed a mutual defense agreement. For more than 36 years since that time, the U.S. troops and United Nation observers have been stationed at the border between North and South Korea. And for more than 36 years the United States has remained the ultimate guarantor of the survival of South Korea. 7



# ENDNOTES

1. Kwang Il Baek. Korea and the United States. Seoul: Seoul Computer Press, 1988, p. 28.

2. Chin-Tae So. "South Korea and It's Security Environment." Air University, Report No. MS 116-81, April 1981, p. 13.

3. Baek, p. 31.

4. Baek, p. 21.

5. Frederick M. Bunge. South Korea: A Country Study. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982, p. 26.

6. Baek, p. 50.

7. Richard T. Detrio. Strategic Partners: South Korea and the United States. Washington: National Defense University Press, 1989, p. 6.

## CHAPTER III

### BIG POWER INTERESTS IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

All the major powers involved in the Korean Peninsula share a common goal in avoidance of hostilities because of the incalculable cost of another Korean War and the dangers to their own foreign policy objectives. For the foreseeable future, the foreign powers will attempt to relieve tensions in Korea as a means of reducing overall tensions among themselves. This chapter will outline the interests of the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and the United States in the Korean Peninsula.

#### SOVIET UNION

Moscow has three goals in the Korean Peninsula. The short-range objective is to consolidate its influence in North Korea and once Kim Il Sung passes from the scene, to obtain military bases in that country. As long as Kim Il Sung is alive, it is unlikely that he will allow Moscow access to such facilities.

Moscow's medium-range objective is to participate as a prominent player in any accommodation between North and South Korea. The Soviets do not want a new Korean War. They have little interest in a reunified Korea which, as

they understand, is not possible to achieve in the foreseeable future. However, they do not wish to be frozen out of an accommodation between the two Koreas that is orchestrated by China or the West.

Moscow's longer range objective is to establish economic and political relations with South Korea. It is South Korea, after all, not North Korea, that is already a major economic power. South Korea's trade, technology, and credits could be of enormous help to the Soviets in their drive to modernize. 1

To recap, the Soviet interest in the Korean Peninsula is now more political and economic than military. North Korea was very important to the Soviet Union during the period of the intense Sino-Soviet conflict. As the Sino-Soviet tension decreased, North Korea's political value to the Soviet Union diminished. As long as Kim Il Sung is alive the Soviets will be content with the present status quo. 2

### CHINA

Since 1949, China has shown a strong and direct interest in the problems of war and peace on the Korean Peninsula, with examples of this interest being the direct intervention in the Korean War in 1950 and the substantial economic and military assistance for North Korea's post-war recovery and arms build-up and the signing of a mutual defense treaty in 1961. 3

During the 1980's China has maintained a markedly conciliatory and realistic posture toward the Korean Peninsula. While China has publicly endorsed and assisted North Korea's unification policy and related diplomatic maneuvers, China has attempted to exercise a moderating influence over North Korea and to relax the potentially explosive tensions in Northeast Asia.

China has appreciably reduced the military rhetoric against South Korea and has quietly sought to improve their non-diplomatic relations with South Korea in such areas as sports, limited trade and communications.

The avoidance of another all-out armed conflict will remain a number-one priority in China's Korean policy. For this reason the Chinese are anticipated to discourage any North Korean initiatives for military provocation and to promote the easing of inter-Korean tensions. Even though China will continue to emphasize the importance of Korea's unification and to demonstrate their public support for North Korea's unification policy, they will not put too much credence in a short-term fulfillment of Korea's peaceful and independent unification. China will instead pursue a set of more tangible objectives with respect to both Koreas.

As far as North Korea is concerned, the Chinese will attempt to keep their military alliance intact and to counterbalance Pyongyang's slow drift toward Moscow. China is likely to continue diplomatic support, to ensure economic cooperation, and to provide military assistance for North

Korea to the extent that a viable military balance can be maintained on the peninsula. 4

#### JAPAN

Japan considers the security of South Korea to be important to the economic, political, and military interests of its country. Japan is the number one foreign investor in South Korea. Japan improved her relations with Korea by signing a normalization treaty in 1965. Japan sees the U.S. in South Korea as an indispensable part of the Asian balance of power. 5

The Japanese have a strong economic interest in South Korea. A large amount of Japanese investment money underwrites development and industry in South Korea. In addition, South Korea provides a flourishing export market for Japanese products and technology. South Korea's value to Japan is primarily economic, and it is of value to Japan's security only insofar as it functions against Communism. Japan's view of South Korea as an economic interest and Communist buffer area have led the Japanese to place a premium on stability and peace on the Korean Peninsula. 6

Japan's diplomatic relations with North Korea have up to this time been informal. These informal relations trade with North Korea under the slogan "separation of trade from politics." These informal relations are designed to

implement Japan's two-Korea policy of maintaining peace and stability in the region.

The political policy of maintaining two Koreas and pursuing peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula is in the Japanese best interest. Japan depends on the U.S. presence in South Korea to maintain the tranquility and status quo.

#### UNITED STATES

The presence of U.S. forces in South Korea is a significant element in terms of North-South relations on the peninsula and also for contributing to regional stability. The main strategic interest of the United States is obviously to deter a North Korean attack and, if necessary, to help South Korea defend against one. There is also a real concern that a North Korean takeover of South Korea by force might have adverse effects of Japan, either by large-scale rearmament or accommodation with the Soviet Union and on the American relationship with Japan. Conversely, the existing situation helps not only to promote stability in Japanese foreign and defense policy but to ensure a Western anchor for an effort by the United States, South Korea, and Japan, jointly, to deny passage of the Korean Strait to the Soviet Pacific Fleet in the event of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation. 7

Today the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and the United

States have either severe political or economic problems and in some cases both. It is in the best interest of all concerned in maintaining the peace on the Korean Peninsula through holding back any North Korean ambitions regarding South Korea and vice versa and to encourage continual dialogue between the two countries. In conclusion, all involved will be content in maintaining the status quo.

## ENDNOTES

1. Donald Zagoria. The U.S.-Korean Security Relationship: Prospects and Challenges for the 1990s. Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc., 1988, p. 26.
2. Richard T. Detrio. Strategic Partners: South Korea and the United States. Washington: National Defense University Press, 1989, pp. 74-77.
3. Chae-Jin Lee "The Role of China in the Korean Unification Process." Asian Perspective, Volume 10, No. 1, Spring-Summer 1988, p.96.
4. Golam W. Choudhury. China in World Affairs. Colorado: Western Press, 1982, pp. 219-222.
5. Young-Jeh Kim. Toward a Unified Korea. Seoul: Seoul Computer Company, 1987, pp. 167-168.
6. Chong-Sik Lee. Japan and Korea. California: Stanford Press, 1985, pp. 174-180.
7. Edward A. Olson. "U.S.-Japan-ROK Military Cooperation." Asian Perspective, Volume 9, No. 2, Fall-Winter 1985, pp. 11-14.



## CHAPTER IV

### NORTH AND SOUTH KOREAN MILITARY CAPABILITY

Since World War II, North and South Korea have formed a diametrically different system based on different political ideologies. South Korea established a liberal democratic government under the influence of the United States, while North Korea created a Communist regime at the prodding of the Soviet Union. The division of the two countries created a hostile political and military relationship that only deepened during and after the Korean War. As division has persisted, the state of confrontation has become pluralized and has grown extremely dangerous. North-South confrontation in the military sphere has been especially serious.

North Korea, which provoked the Korean War, has not renounced its political goal to unite the Korean Peninsula by force of arms. To this end, North Korea has concentrated its energies on arms buildup and today boasts having the sixth largest army in the world, 930,000 men. South Korea's army has a total of 550,000 men. During the past decade, North Korea has spent an estimated 25-30 percent of its GNP on defense while South Korea has spent six percent of its GNP. 1

North Korea produces over 300 tracked vehicles a year,

about equally divided among tanks, armored personnel carriers, and self-propelled artillery. With a population of 22 million people and a per capita income of less than \$800--North Korea spend more on military expenditures than any other country in the world except Israel. 2

North Korea has a quantitative lead over South Korea in the critical areas of numbers of troops, tanks, artillery, mortars, air defense systems, submarines, patrol craft, combat aircraft and fixed-wing transports (See Chart 1). North Korea has five mechanized divisions to South Korea's two, five armored brigades to South Korea's one and a lead of almost three to one in tanks, with 4,000 to 1,560. The North has a large edge in both ships and aircraft--765 combat aircraft/helicopters and 430 combat vessels compared to 545 and 119, respectively for South Korea. 3

Although South Korea continues its own efforts to resist aggression independently, South Korea still requires strong U.S. support--especially in the area of air support--to deter a North Korean attack. The U.S. deploys the 2nd Infantry Division near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and deploys air and naval forces in and around South Korea. Forces of the U.S. and South Korea are integrated into a single command structure, called the Combined Forces Command, which is commanded by a U.S. general. Through annual major exercises, such as TEAM SPIRIT, the United States demonstrates allied cooperation and reinforcement potential. 4

Today, North Korea maintains an offensive oriented military superior to the South, and has deployed two-thirds of its forces within 15 miles of the DMZ. North Korea retains the capability to attack South Korea by land, sea, and air with very little warning time, 12 to 24 hours. North Korea's strategy over the years has been one of: (1) total war, (2) mixture of regular and irregular warfare, (3) large-scale, preemptive surprise attacks, and (4) blitzkrieg warfare. To counter this, South Korea had to change its strategy from one of linear defense aimed at stopping the blitzkrieg to an offensive deterrence strategy calling for the check of the enemy's advance at the initial stage of war followed by an immediate counteroffensive actions to hit the enemy deep and restore the border. With the capitol of Seoul only 28 miles from the DMZ the South Korean forces have almost no room to fallback, regroup and maneuver. 5

In conclusion, despite North Korea's military buildup and in the absence of outside intervention, South Korea along with the continued presence of the United States has the ability to deter any North Korean aggression. As South Korea continues to modernize its armed forces in the 1990's it will be possible to begin cutting back on some U.S. forces. However this should be carefully predicated on North Korean intentions and capabilities and not Congressional rhetoric.

# MILITARY BALANCE

## NORTH KOREA

Active: 1,040,000

Army	930,000
Navy	40,000
AF	70,000

Army: 930,000

15 Corps (1 Arm, 4 Mech, 1 Inf,)  
8 All Arms, 1 Arty

31 Inf/Mtr Div  
15 Arm Bde  
20 Mtr Bde  
4 Indep Bde  
1 Spec Pur Bde

4,000 Tanks  
300 Lt Tanks  
200 BMP  
1,600 APC

1,900 Towed Arty  
2,800 Sp Arty  
2,500 MRL  
11,000 Mtrs  
8,000 ADA Guns  
54 SSM (FROG)

Navy: 40,000

23 Subs  
4 Corvettes  
4 Frigates  
29 Missile Craft  
173 Torpedo Craft  
40 Mine Craft  
126 Amphib Craft

Air Force: 70,000

650 Cbt Acft (190 MiG 21/23/29)  
115 Armed Helo (Hughes 500/Mi-24)  
280 FW Transports  
137 Utility Helo

## SOUTH KOREA

Active: 650,000

Army	550,000	Army	31,600
Navy	60,000	Navy	800
AF	40,000	AF	11,600

Army: 550,000

3 Army, 7 Corps

2 Mech Div  
19 Inf Div  
1 Indep Inf Bde  
7 Spec For Bde  
2 ADA Bde  
2 SAM Bde/1 Avn Bde

1,560 Tanks  
200 AIFV  
1,550 APC

4,000 Towed Arty  
100 Sp Arty  
100 MRL  
5,300 Mtrs  
TOW ATGW  
600 ADA Guns/540 SAM

Navy: 60,000

3 Subs  
11 Destroyers  
17 Frigates  
11 Missile Craft  
68 Patrol Craft  
9 Mine Sweepers  
52 Amphib Craft

Air Force: 40,000

447 Cbt Acft (48 F-16/204 F-4/5)  
98 Armed Helo  
37 FW Transports  
303 Utility Helo  
60 Naval Cbt Acft (FW&Armed Helo)

# ENDNOTES

1. Yong-Ok Park. "ROK-US Security Relations in the 1990s." Korea and World Affairs, Vol 11, No. 4, Winter 1987, p. 298.
2. Park, p. 300.
3. Francois Heisbourg. The Military Balance 1989-1990. London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1989, pp. 164-166.
4. Richard T. Detrio. Strategic Partners: South Korea and the United States. Washington: National Defense University Press, 1989, pp. 15-25.
5. Hong-Chul Yum. A Comparative Study of North and South Korea. Seoul: National Unification Board, 1989, pp. 283-293.
6. Heisbourg, pp. 164-166.

## CHAPTER V

### FUTURE ROLE OF THE U.S. MILITARY IN SOUTH KOREA

Although the forward deployment of U.S. military forces has maintained the peace in South Korea for 37 years and North Korea has not renounced its goal of forced reunification, there is mounting Congressional pressure to reduce the U.S. military presence in South Korea. Congress is basing this reduction on the recent events in Europe where "peace is breaking out all over", a perceived lessening of the Soviet threat worldwide, and as a measure to reduce the U.S. federal budget by military manpower cuts at home and abroad.

North Korea is not affected by events in Eastern Europe and also continues to remain the most closed society in the world today. There is virtually no contact with the outside, and, as long as Kim Il Sung is alive, it will remain so. North Korea has never given up its intention of using military force to unify the peninsula. As discussed earlier, North Korea enjoys a clear military advantage and incidents over the years directed at the South is a clear indicator that North Korea is very unpredictable and is not effected by any outside pressure to conform to civilized standards of behavior. 1

The strong U.S. political, economic and military

commitment to South Korea has played a vital role in the preservation of democracy and freedom in that country. Most South Koreans hope this presence and resolve will remain essentially unchanged until South Korea will have completed modernization of its armed forces, unification talks are fruitful and decrease the tension, or a new North Korean leader emerges who is a man of peace.

Today the U.S. maintains a military force of approximately 43,500: 31,600 Army, 11,600 Air Force and 800 Navy and Marine Corps personnel. Of the Army personnel, about half are combat troops; the rest perform various support functions. The 2nd Infantry Division, numbering 16,000 soldiers, is the key U.S. combat unit in South Korea. The division is deployed just south of the DMZ in a strategic reserve position capable of moving into either of the two major historical invasion routes leading to the capitol of Seoul. 2

The United States can quickly reinforce South Korea with combat aircraft and ground troops from Okinawa and the Philippines. Also, air reinforcement can come from Guam, Okinawa and two carrier task forces located in the Western Pacific.

Before the United States goes beyond the announced 1990 reduction of 7,000 personnel from South Korea, the U.S. must first clearly analyze the capabilities and intentions of North Korea. It cannot be denied that the presence of U.S. forces in South Korea, particularly U.S.

ground forces, has been the single most important factor in deterring another war in Korea. The 31,600 ground troops stationed just South of the Demilitarized Zone have performed the same vital role as the 300,000 U.S. troops in Europe with just one-tenth of the troops.

In conclusion, it should be noted that North Korea's rapid developments in offensive capability coincided with the U.S. 7th Infantry Divisions's withdrawal in 1970-71. In this regard, North Korea could very well regard the withdrawal of more U.S. troops as a chance to even further the military imbalance between themselves and the South. The bottom line is that North Korea's military capabilities pose a real threat to South Korea's security. Thus, as long as there remains a military imbalance on the peninsula, the presence of U.S. forces in South Korea is an indispensable element to deter the North Korean threat as we go into the 1990's.



ENDNOTES

1. Hong-Chul Yum. A Comparative Study of North and South Korea. Seoul: National Unification Board, 1988, pp. 314-315.
2. Kwang-Il Baek. Korea and the United States. Seoul: Seoul Computer Press, 1988, pp. 166-167.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The record of South Korea-US relations since the end of World War II indicates that there are elements of both change and continuity in the nature of the bilateral relationship. Friendly ties and a strong sense of common interests have survived changes of government in both countries and power realignments in world and regional relations. Through the entire lifespan of the Republic of Korea, security concerns have been central to its foreign policy and particularly to US-South Korean relations. Only the United States has been able and willing to provide South Korea with the assistance necessary for its security and defense.

The Korean Peninsula's geopolitical and strategic location has historically occupied a central role in regional wars and invasion routes. China and Japan have crisscrossed the peninsula for centuries as an invasion route to each others country. Today the mistrust between China and Japan remains just as the Korean Peninsula remains an important regional buffer between the two.

It is in the best interest of the major powers of the Soviet Union, China, Japan and the United States to pursue peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. While North

Korea's two major allies, China and the Soviet Union publicly urge withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea, they have exerted no pressure on the United States to do so, and, presumably would rather see U.S. forces remain in South Korea to assure regional stability. A war on the peninsula could easily drag both countries into the fray, which is something neither wants. They fully understand that the presence of U.S. forces in the South is a decisive factor deterring North Korea aggression. China and the Soviet Union need to continue discouraging North Korea from taking unilateral action against South Korea. China and the Soviet Union discouraged North Korea attacking South when South Vietnam fell in 1975. Also, both countries warned North Korea against taking any action against the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

As we enter the 1990's the United States should continue support of the ROK-US military alliance through the mutual defense pact, including continued deployment of U.S. forces in South Korea under mutual consent. The United States should continue to furnish South Korea with enough modern weapon systems to maintain military parity with North Korea and assist in the military modernization efforts of South Korea. Joint exercises such as TEAM SPIRIT should continue and sometime in the future include Japan's Self Defense Forces to participate.

The United States and South Korea have become allies out of necessity, and international forces responsible for

the alliance have not vanished. South Korea's most important relationship clearly will continue to be with the United States. Both sides have fought together in two wars and have developed an increasing web of interests. The United States needs to encourage appropriate initiatives between North and South Korea to relieve tensions on the peninsula. Even as the United States starts a draw-down of some forces from South Korea, the United States, for the foreseeable future must maintain ground forces in Northeast Asia to preserve South Korea's freedom and to retain U.S. influence in the region.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Agency for International Development. AID Economic Data Book for Countries of the Far East. Korea Section, Washington: US Government Printing Office, May 1971.
2. An, Tai-Sung. North Korea: A Political Handbook. Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc, 1983.
3. Baek, Kwang-Il. Korea and the United States. Seoul Computer Press, 1988.
4. Bunge, Frederick M. South Korea: A Country Study. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1982.
5. Choudhury, Golam W. China in World Affairs. Colorado: Western Press, 1982.
6. Detrio, Richard T. Strategic Partners: South Korea and the United States. Washington: National Defense University Press, 1989.
7. Heisbourg, Francois. The Military Balance 1989-1990. London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1989.
8. Kim, Young C. Major Powers and Korea. Maryland: Research Institute for Korean Affairs, 1973.
9. Kim, Young-Jeh. Toward a Unified Korea. Seoul: Seoul Computer Company, 1987.
10. Kim, Seung-Hwan. The Soviet Union and North Korea. Seoul: Seoul Computer Press, 1988.
11. Lee, Suk-Bok. The Impact of U.S. Forces in Korea. Washington: National Defense University Press, July 1987.
12. Lee, Chae-Jin. "The Role of China in the Korean Unification Process." Asian Perspective, Volume 10, No.1, Spring-Summer 1986.
13. Lee, Chong-Sik. Japan and Korea. California: Stanford Press, 1985.
14. Olsen, Edward A. "U.S.-Japan-ROK Military Cooperation." Asian Perspective, Volume 9, No.2, Fall-Winter 1985.
15. Park, Yong-Ok. "ROK-US Security Relations in the 1990s." Korea and World Affairs, Vol 11, No.4, Winter 1987.

16. Raho, Stephen A. III. "Korea and American National Security." Parameters, September, 1989.

17. So, Chin-Tae. "South Korea and It's Security Environment." Air University, Report No. MS 116-81, April 1981.

18. Yu, Suk Ryal. "Soviet-North Korean Relations and Security on the Korean Peninsula." Asian Perspective, Volume 11, No 1, Spring-Summer 1987.

19. Yum, Hong-Chul. A Comparative Study of North and South Korea. Seoul: National Unification Board, 1988.

20. Zagoria, Donald. The U.S.-Korean Security Relationship: Prospects and Challenges for the 1990s. Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc., 1988.